

REMARKS

Claims 22, 23 and 25-34 are pending in the present application. Claims 22 and 25 have been amended. Claims 8-12 and 24 have been canceled.

Drawings

Applicants note the Examiner's acceptance of the Drawing Replacement Sheets filed on August 15, 2003.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 8 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by the Weber reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,495,083).

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 9-11, 22, 23 and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Tsuzuku et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 4,426,341) in view of the Saeki et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 4,954,301). (Applicants presume that this rejection is in further view of the Weber reference since claims 9-11 are dependent upon claim 8.)

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants respectfully note the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 27-34

are allowed.

Applicants also respectfully note the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 24 and 25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Although Applicants do not necessarily concede that the above noted prior art rejections are proper, claim 22 has been amended to include the features of dependent claim 24. Also, claim 25 has been amended to be in independent form. Accordingly, claims 22, 23, 25 and 26 should now also be allowable. These above noted amendments have been made merely to advance prosecution of this application.

Conclusion

The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the above noted amendments, which have been made directly responsive to the Examiner's acknowledgment of allowable subject matter, and thus should not raise any new issues that would be an undue burden to consider.

Applicants also respectfully submit that since claim 22 has been amended merely to include the features of previously pending claim 24, and since claim 25 has been amended merely to be in independent form, these amendments should not be construed as narrowing scope within the meaning of *Festo*.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the corresponding rejections, and to pass the claims of the present application to issue, for


at least the above reasons.

In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, please contact Andrew J. Telesz, Jr. (Reg. No. 33,581) at (703) 715-0870 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss these matters.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment for any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

Respectfully submitted,

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